

at their command, we are not going to be able to control some of these species. Some of them, like the giant silvinia, are so resistant to so much, and they hide among other plants until they take over and just spread so rapidly, that we must come together.

It is gratifying to see such bipartisan effort in trying to hold on to the land we love.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 767, the Refuge Ecology Protection, Assistance, and Immediate Response Act, which I authored. Passage of this legislation today will bring us one step closer to giving our National Wildlife Refuge System a vital tool in the war being waged against invasive species.

For too long, our National Wildlife Refuges have been overlooked and neglected. The Refuge System has forged on as a System under siege from a number of fronts. Paramount among these has been the steady march of invasive plants and animals that have come from other places and literally taken over, crowding out the very wildlife and habitat the refuges are charged with protecting. Experts and refuge managers at the Fish and Wildlife Service have identified invasives as the number one threat to the biological integrity of our National Wildlife Refuges. Nevertheless, without the resources to maintain even the most basic functions and infrastructure—indeed, many refuge units do not have any dedicated staff at all—refuges have been able to do little to respond to invasive species.

This House has affirmed its commitment to our wildlife refuges by approving the largest-ever budget increase for the Refuge System in the FY08 Interior Appropriations bill. This money will begin to bring the System's budget to a level where it can stop cutting employees and shuttering refuges and begin to address its pressing maintenance and management needs. This is a good start. But with all the challenges that face our refuges, there is still a great need to focus resources on preventing the spread of invasive species. That is why we must pass the REPAIR Act here today.

H.R. 767 authorizes new grants that will bring the Fish and Wildlife Service together with State agencies, community groups, and private citizens to form a united front against invasives. The bill confronts the challenge of invasive species through a two-pronged approach. First, it authorizes immediate response grants when a harmful non-native species has been identified as an immediate threat to a refuge at a stage at which rapid eradication is possible. This way we will be able to prevent new invasive species from taking hold and wreaking havoc on refuge ecosystems.

The second line of defense in the bill are REPAIR grants, which contribute to a more long-term strategy for combating existing invasives. These grants would go to States, local governments, community groups, or individuals to remove harmful non-native species and promote native species and their habitat on lands and waters in and adjacent to National Wildlife Refuges. Additionally, the grants could be used to complete assessment projects consistent with existing State wildlife conservation plans to identify invasive species, assess the needs on the ground, and target resources to address the problem adequately and efficiently.

All grants would be awarded on a competitive basis and include monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure proper oversight ability by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Federal grants would cover 100 percent of the cost for projects within refuges and for immediate response projects, but a non-Federal cost share of at least 25 percent would be required for REPAIR grants on adjacent lands.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the REPAIR Act brings together the public and private sectors to ensure the future of our Wildlife Refuge System. These are special places unlike any other in the world. They are the only Federal land system devoted primarily to the preservation of our unique wildlife resources. I know from my countless hours spent taking in the grandeur of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, admiring the special beauty of Trempealeau NWR, or proudly watching the whooping cranes take off from Necedah NWR behind their ultralight guide, that these places are an integral part of the American experience that deserve special protection.

I would like to thank my fellow co-chairs of the Congressional National Wildlife Refuge Caucus, JIM SAXTON, MIKE THOMPSON, and MIKE CASTLE for helping promote our Refuge System here in the House, and for their support of H.R. 767. I also extend my great thanks to Natural Resources Committee Chairman RAHALL and Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee Chairwoman BORDALLO for their support and for helping this bill get through the committee process and to the floor today. Finally, I thank Dave Jansen and the rest of the committee staff for their expertise and tireless work on behalf of our Nation's tremendous natural endowment.

H.R. 767 makes good policy by fostering cooperation between government and private entities in pursuit of a common goal in the national interest. I urge my colleagues to support its passage today so we can begin to protect America's National Wildlife Refuges from further attack and degradation. We owe it to future generations of hunters, anglers, wildlife enthusiasts, and nature lovers of all types to preserve creatures and habitats that are distinctly American.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. BORDALLO. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his very supportive words on this particular measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 767, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORAL REEF CONSERVATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 1205) to reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1205

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Coral Reef Conservation Amendments Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

(a) PROJECT DIVERSITY.—Section 204(d) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6403(d)) is amended—

(1) in the heading by striking "GEOGRAPHIC AND BIOLOGICAL" and inserting "PROJECT"; and

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

"(3) Remaining funds shall be awarded for—

"(A) projects (with priority given to community-based local action strategies) that address emerging priorities or threats, including international and territorial priorities, or threats identified by the Administrator in consultation with the Coral Reef Task Force; and

"(B) other appropriate projects, as determined by the Administrator, including monitoring and assessment, research, pollution reduction, education, and technical support."

(b) APPROVAL CRITERIA.—Section 204(g) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 6403(g)) is amended—

(1) by striking "or" after the semicolon in paragraph (9);

(2) by striking paragraph (10); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

"(10) promoting activities designed to minimize the likelihood of vessel impacts on coral reefs, particularly those areas identified under section 210(b), including the promotion of ecologically sound navigation and anchorages near coral reefs; or

"(11) promoting and assisting entities to work with local communities, and all appropriate governmental and nongovernmental organizations, to support community-based planning and management initiatives for the protection of coral reef ecosystems."

SEC. 3. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

Section 206 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6405) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 206. EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIONS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may undertake or authorize action necessary—

"(1) to minimize the destruction or loss of, or injury to, a coral reef from—

"(A) vessel impacts, derelict fishing gear, vessel anchors, and anchor chains; and

"(B) from unforeseen or disaster-related circumstances; and

"(2) to stabilize, repair, recover, or restore such coral reef.

"(b) VESSEL REMOVAL; RESTABILIZATION.—Action authorized by subsection (a) includes vessel removal and emergency restabilization of the vessel or any impacted coral reef.

"(c) PARTNERING WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—When possible, action by the Administrator under this section should—

"(1) be conducted in partnership with other government agencies as appropriate, including—

"(A) the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of the Interior; and

"(B) agencies of States and territories of the United States; and

“(2) leverage resources of other agencies.

“(d) EMERGENCY RESPONSE ASSISTANCE BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The head of any other Federal agency may assist the Administrator in emergency response actions under this section, using funds available for operations of the agency concerned.

“(2) REIMBURSEMENT.—The Administrator, subject to the availability of appropriations, may reimburse a Federal agency for assistance provided under paragraph (1).

“(e) LIABILITY FOR COSTS AND DAMAGES TO CORAL REEFS.—

“(1) TREATMENT OF CORAL REEFS UNDER NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES ACT.—For purposes of the provisions set forth in paragraph (2), and subject to paragraph (3), each of the terms ‘sanctuary resources’, ‘resource’, ‘sanctuary resource managed under law or regulations for that sanctuary’, ‘national marine sanctuary’, ‘sanctuary resources of the national marine sanctuary’, and ‘sanctuary resources of other national marine sanctuaries’ is deemed to include any coral reef that is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or any State, without regard to whether such coral reef is located in a national marine sanctuary.

“(2) APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES ACT.—The provisions referred to in paragraph (1) are the following provisions of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act:

“(A) Paragraphs (6) and (7) of section 302 (16 U.S.C. 1432).

“(B) Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section 306 (16 U.S.C. 1436).

“(C) Section 307 (16 U.S.C. 1437).

“(D) Section 312 (16 U.S.C. 1443).

“(3) STATE CONSENT REQUIRED.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall not apply to any coral reef that is subject to the jurisdiction of a State unless the Governor of that State notifies the Secretary that the State consents to that application.

“(B) REVOCATION OF CONSENT.—The Governor of a State may revoke consent under subparagraph (A) by notifying the Secretary of such revocation.

“(4) CONSISTENCY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES.—Any action taken under the authority of this subsection must be consistent with otherwise applicable international law and treaties.

“(5) ACTIONS AUTHORIZED WITH RESPECT TO VESSELS.—Actions authorized under this subsection include vessel removal, and emergency re-stabilization of a vessel and any coral reef that is impacted by a vessel

“(6) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may issue regulations necessary to implement this subsection.”

SEC. 4. NATIONAL PROGRAM.

(a) PURPOSE OF ACT.—Section 202 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(3) to develop sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems and the threats to such ecosystems including large-scale threats related to climate change, to benefit local communities and the Nation, and to the extent practicable support and enhance coral reef research capabilities at local academic institutions;”

and

(2) by striking “and” after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (6) and inserting “; and”, and by adding at the end the following:

“(7) to recognize the benefits of healthy coral reefs to island and coastal communities and to encourage Federal action to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable,

the continued availability of those benefits.”

(b) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTION STRATEGY.—Section 203(b)(8) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6402(b)(8)) is amended to read as follows:

“(8) conservation, including resilience and the consideration of island and local traditions and practices.”

(c) AMENDMENTS RELATING TO ACTIVITIES TO CONSERVE CORAL REEFS AND CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS.—Section 207(b) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6406) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3) by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (4)—

(A) by striking “cooperative conservation” and inserting “cooperative research, conservation,”; and

(B) by striking “partners.” and inserting “partners, including academic institutions located in those States, territories, and freely associated States referred to in section 212; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) activities designed to minimize the likelihood of vessel impacts or other physical damage to coral reefs, including those areas identified in section 210(b).”

SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Section 208 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6407) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 208. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

“Not later than March 1, 2010, and every 3 years thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing all activities undertaken to implement the strategy, including—

“(1) a description of the funds obligated by each participating Federal agency to advance coral reef conservation during each of the 3 fiscal years next preceding the fiscal year in which the report is submitted;

“(2) a description of Federal interagency and cooperative efforts with States, United States territories, freely associated States, and non-governmental partner organizations to prevent or address overharvesting, coastal runoff, or other anthropogenic impacts on coral reef ecosystems, including projects undertaken with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corps of Engineers;

“(3) a summary of the information contained in the vessel grounding inventory established under section 210, including additional authorization or funding, needed for response and removal of such vessels;

“(4) a description of Federal disaster response actions taken pursuant to the National Response Plan to address damage to coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems; and

“(5) an assessment of the condition of United States coral reefs, accomplishments under this Act, and the effectiveness of management actions to address threats to coral reefs, including actions taken to address large-scale threats to coral reef ecosystems related to climate change.”

SEC. 6. FUND; GRANTS; GROUNDING INVENTORY; COORDINATION.

(a) FUND; GRANTS; GROUNDING INVENTORY; COORDINATION.—The Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 205(a) (16 U.S.C. 6404(a)), by striking “organization solely” and all that follows and inserting “organization—

“(1) to support partnerships between the public and private sectors that further the

purposes of this Act and are consistent with the national coral reef strategy under section 203; and

“(2) to address emergency response actions under section 206.”

(2) by adding at the end of section 205(b) (16 U.S.C. 6404(b)) “The organization is encouraged to solicit funding and in-kind services from the private sector, including non-governmental organizations, for emergency response actions under section 206 and for activities to prevent damage to coral reefs, including areas identified in section 210(b)(2).”

(3) in section 205(c) (16 U.S.C. 6404(c)), by striking “the grant program” and inserting “any grant program or emergency response action”;

(4) by redesignating sections 209 and 210 as sections 213 and 214, respectively; and

(5) by inserting after section 208 the following:

“SEC. 209. COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING GRANTS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may make grants to entities that are eligible to receive grants under section 204(c) to provide additional funds to such entities to work with local communities and through appropriate Federal and State entities to prepare and implement plans for the increased protection of coral reef areas identified by the community and scientific experts as high priorities for focused attention. The plans shall—

“(1) support attainment of 1 or more of the criteria described in section 204(g);

“(2) be developed at the community level;

“(3) utilize where applicable watershed-based or ecosystem-based approaches;

“(4) provide for coordination with Federal and State experts and managers;

“(5) build upon local approaches or models, including traditional or island-based resource management concepts; and

“(6) complement local action strategies or regional plans for coral reef conservation.

“(b) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The provisions of subsections (b), (d), (f), and (h) of section 204 apply to grants under subsection (a), except that, for the purpose of applying section 204(b)(1) to grants under this section, ‘75 percent’ shall be substituted for ‘50 percent’.

“SEC. 210. VESSEL GROUNDING INVENTORY.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with other Federal agencies, may maintain an inventory of all vessel grounding incidents involving coral reefs, including a description of—

“(1) the impacts to such resources;

“(2) vessel and ownership information, if available;

“(3) the estimated cost of removal, mitigation, or restoration;

“(4) the response action taken by the owner, the Administrator, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, or other Federal or State agency representatives;

“(5) the status of the response action, including the dates of vessel removal and mitigation or restoration and any actions taken to prevent future grounding incidents; and

“(6) recommendations for additional navigational aids or other mechanisms for preventing future grounding incidents.

“(b) IDENTIFICATION OF AT-RISK REEFS.—The Administrator may—

“(1) use information from any inventory maintained under subsection (a) or any other available information source to identify all coral reef areas that have a high incidence of vessel impacts, including groundings and anchor damage; and

“(2) identify appropriate measures, including action by other agencies, to reduce the likelihood of such impacts.

“SEC. 211. REGIONAL COORDINATION.

“The Administrator shall work in coordination and collaboration with other Federal agencies, States, and United States territorial governments to implement the national coral reef action strategy developed under section 203, including regional and local strategies, to address multiple threats to coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems such as coastal runoff, vessel impacts, overharvesting, and factors attributed to climate change.

“SEC. 212. UNITED STATES CORAL REEF TASK FORCE.

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established the United States Coral Reef Task Force.

“(b) GOAL.—The goal of the Task Force shall be to lead, coordinate, and strengthen Federal Government actions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems.

“(c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force shall be—

“(1) to coordinate, in cooperation with State, territory, freely associated State, commonwealth, and local government partners, academic, and nongovernmental partners if appropriate, activities regarding the mapping, monitoring, research, conservation, mitigation, restoration of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems;

“(2) to monitor and advise regarding implementation of the policy and Federal agency responsibilities set forth in Executive Order 13089 and the national coral reef action strategy developed under section 203; and

“(3) to work with the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and in coordination with the other members of the Task Force, to—

“(A) assess the United States role in international trade and protection of coral species; and

“(B) encourage implementation of appropriate strategies and actions to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources worldwide.

“(d) MEMBERSHIP, GENERALLY.—The Task Force shall be comprised of—

“(1) the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Secretary of the Interior, who shall be co-chairs of the Task Force;

“(2) the Administrator of the Agency of International Development;

“(3) the Secretary of Agriculture;

“(4) the Secretary of Defense;

“(5) the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Corps of Engineers;

“(6) the Secretary of Homeland Security;

“(7) the Attorney General;

“(8) the Secretary of State;

“(9) the Secretary of Transportation;

“(10) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;

“(11) the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

“(12) the Director of the National Science Foundation;

“(13) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

“(14) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

“(15) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the State of Florida;

“(16) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the State of Hawaii;

“(17) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the Territory of Guam;

“(18) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the Territory of American Samoa; and

“(19) the Governor, or a representative of the Governor, of the Virgin Islands.

“(e) NONVOTING MEMBERS.—The President, or a representative of the President, of each of the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau may appoint a nonvoting member of the Task Force.

“(f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL AGENCY MEMBERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal agency members of the Task Force shall—

“(A) identify the actions of their agencies that may affect coral reef ecosystems;

“(B) utilize the programs and authorities of their agencies to protect and enhance the conditions of such ecosystems; and

“(C) assist in the implementation of the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs, the national coral reef action strategy developed under section 203, the local action strategies, and any other coordinated efforts approved by the Task Force.

“(2) CO-CHAIRS.—In addition to their responsibilities under paragraph (1), the co-chairs of the Task Force shall administer performance of the functions of the Task Force and facilitate the coordination of the Federal agency members of the Task Force.

“(g) WORKING GROUPS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The co-chairs of the Task Force may establish working groups as necessary to meet the goals and duties of this Act. The Task Force may request the co-chairs to establish such a working group.

“(2) PARTICIPATION BY NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.—The co-chairs may allow a nongovernmental organization or academic institution to participate in such a working group.

“(h) FACA.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Task Force.”

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—Section 204 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6403) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) MULTIYEAR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Administrator may enter into multiyear cooperative agreements with the heads of other Federal agencies, States, territories, other freely associated States, local governments, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations to carry out the activities of the national coral reef action strategy developed under section 203 and to implement regional strategies developed pursuant to section 211.”

SEC. 7. AMENDMENTS RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENTS AND CLARIFICATIONS TO DEFINITIONS.—

(1) FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT.—Section 8 of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 666b) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, including coral reef ecosystems (as such term is defined in section 214 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000)”.

(2) FISH AND WILDLIFE ACT OF 1956 AND FISH AND WILDLIFE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1978.—With respect to the authorities under the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a et. seq.) and the authorities under the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 742l), references in such Acts to “wildlife” and “fish and wildlife” shall be construed to include coral reef ecosystems (as such term is defined in section 214 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as amended by this Act).

(b) CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of the Interior may provide technical assistance and, subject to the availability of appropriations, financial assistance to coastal States (as that term is defined in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as amended by this Act).

SEC. 8. CLARIFICATION OF DEFINITIONS.

Section 214 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as redesignated by section 6(a) of this Act (relating to definitions; 16 U.S.C. 6409), is further amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’—

“(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

“(B) in sections 206 and 209, means the Secretary of the Interior for purposes of application of those sections to national parks, national wildlife refuges, and Wake Island.”;

(2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) CONSERVATION.—The term ‘conservation’ means the use of methods and procedures that are necessary to preserve or sustain coral reefs and associated species as diverse, viable, and self-perpetuating coral reef ecosystems, including—

“(A) all activities associated with resource management, such as assessment, conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use, and management of habitat;

“(B) mapping;

“(C) monitoring of coral reef ecosystems;

“(D) assistance in the development of management strategies for marine protected area or networks thereof and marine resources consistent with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.);

“(E) law enforcement;

“(F) conflict resolution initiatives;

“(G) community outreach and education; and

“(H) activities that promote safe and ecologically sound navigation.”;

(3) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(3) CORAL.—The term ‘coral’ means species of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

“(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals), Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera (organpipe corals and others), Alcyonacea (soft corals), and Helioporacea (blue coral), of the class Anthozoa; and

“(B) all species of the families Milleporidae (fire corals) and Stylasteridae (stylasterid hydrocorals), of the class Hydrozoa.”;

(4) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

“(4) CORAL REEF.—The term ‘coral reef’ means a limestone structure composed in whole or in part of living zooxanthellate stony corals (Class Anthozoa, Order Scleractinia), their skeletal remains, or both.”;

(5) by amending paragraph (5) to read as follows:

“(5) CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM.—The term ‘coral reef ecosystem’ means a system of coral reefs and geographically associated species, habitats, and environment, including mangroves and seagrass habitats, and the processes that control its dynamics.”;

(6) by amending paragraph (7) to read as follows:

“(7) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’—

“(A) except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), means the Secretary of Commerce;

“(B) in section 206(e), means—

“(i) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to any coral reef or component thereof that is located in—

“(I) the National Wildlife Refuge System;

“(II) the National Park System; or

“(III) the waters surrounding Wake Island under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior, as set forth in Executive Order 11048 (27 Fed. Reg. 8851), dated September 4, 1962; or

“(ii) the Secretary of Commerce, with respect to any other coral reef or component thereof; and

“(C) in sections 203 and 209, means the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior.”

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 213 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (formerly 16 U.S.C. 6408), as redesignated by section 4, is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Commerce to carry out this title \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$32,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, \$34,000,000 for fiscal year 2010 and \$35,000,000 for fiscal years 2011 and 2012.”;

(2) in subsection (b) by striking “\$1,000,000” and inserting “\$2,000,000”;

(3) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

“(c) COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING GRANTS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator to carry out section 209, \$8,000,000 for fiscal years 2008 through 2012, to remain available until expended.”; and

(4) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following:

“(d) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior to carry out this title \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.”.

SEC. 10. ENSURING RESILIENCE.

(a) PURPOSES.—Section 202 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401) is further amended by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (7) as paragraphs (3) through (8), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) to promote the resilience of coral reef ecosystems;”.

(b) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF PROJECT PROPOSALS.—Section 204(g) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6403(g)) is further amended by striking “or” after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (10), by redesignating paragraph (11) as paragraph (12), and by inserting after paragraph (10) the following:

“(11) improving and promoting the resilience of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems; or”.

(c) ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED UNDER NATIONAL PROGRAM.—Section 207(b) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6406(b)) is further amended by striking “and” after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (4), by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6), and by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) improving and promoting the resilience of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems; and”.

SEC. 11. FUNDING FOR MARINE FACILITIES, CORAL REEF RESEARCH, AND CORAL REEF INSTITUTES.

(a) AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 to the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to provide funds to a research facility for coral reef research and protection, and coastal ecology and development, at the American Samoa Community College.

(b) UNIVERSITY OF GUAM.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 to the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion, to provide funds to the University of Guam for coral reef research and protection.

(c) SUPPORT FOR CORAL REEF INSTITUTES.—The Administrator, subject to the availability of appropriations specifically to carry out this subsection, may enter into, renegotiate, or extend a cooperative agreement with any university or local academic institution or other research center with established programs that support coral reef conservation to accomplish the following:

(1) Provide technical and other assistance to build capacity for effective resource management on a regional level and within local communities.

(2) Facilitate interdisciplinary research regarding coral reef ecosystems to improve resource management and improve understanding of potential impacts to such ecosystems attributed to climate change.

(3) Conduct public education programs regarding coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems to improve public awareness of the need to protect and conserve such resources.

(4) To advance the purposes and policies set forth in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section the definitions in section 214 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as redesignated by section 6(a) of this Act and amended by section 8 of this Act, apply.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

□ 1515

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JACKSON of Illinois). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Guam?

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1205, as amended, would reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act through fiscal year 2012 and give the Federal Government, States and territories additional tools to protect and conserve coral reefs. I commend the gentleman from American Samoa, the Honorable ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, for sponsoring this legislation and for his hard work to move it forward.

H.R. 1205 was referred to the Natural Resources Committee and the Science and Technology Committee. I'm including in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an exchange of letters between Chairman NICK RAHALL and BART GORDON asserting both committees jurisdiction in H.R. 1205. Science Committee Chairman BART GORDON gracefully agreed to allow this bill to come to the floor today.

H.R. 1205, as amended, broadens and improves the definition of “coral reef ecosystem” to include mangroves and sea grass habitats. Additionally, the bill gives the Secretaries of Commerce

and the Interior the authority to cover related costs for damages to coral reefs in U.S. waters located outside national marine sanctuaries.

Mr. Speaker, more than 70 percent of the coral reefs under the jurisdiction of the United States are found in the Pacific, including Guam. Regrettably, coral reefs worldwide remain imperiled and deserving of greater protection. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill, as amended.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,

Washington, DC, September 26, 2007.

Hon. BART GORDON,
Chairman, Committee on Science and Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your willingness to allow floor consideration of H.R. 1205, the Coral Reef Conservation Amendments Act of 2007, to proceed unimpeded.

I appreciate your willingness to waive rights to further consideration of H.R. 1205, even though your Committee shares jurisdiction over it and has received an additional referral. Of course, this waiver does not prejudice any further jurisdictional claims by your Committee over this legislation or similar language. Furthermore, I agree to support your request for appointment of conferees from the Committee on Science and Technology if a conference is held on this matter.

As you requested, I will insert our two letters in the Congressional Record as part of the consideration of the bill on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, September 27, 2007.

Hon. NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RAHALL: I write to you regarding H.R. 1205, the “Coral Reef Conservation Amendments Act of 2007.” This legislation was initially referred to both the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Science and Technology.

H.R. 1205 was marked up by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 28, 2007. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner, and, accordingly, I will waive further consideration of this bill in Committee. However, agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as the Committee on Science and Technology waiving its jurisdiction over H.R. 1205.

Further, I request your support for the appointment of Science and Technology Committee conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation on provisions of the bill that are within the Committee's jurisdiction. I also ask that a copy of this letter and your response be placed in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill.

I look forward to working with you as we prepare to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON,
Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1205, the Coral Reef Conservation Amendments Act of 2007. We thank the gentleman from American Samoa and, once again, my friend from Guam and also the gentleman from Puerto Rico for their work on this legislation.

Coral reefs are truly a treasure, but they mean the world to the aquatic life in those areas. This legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to undertake coral reef conservation activities. It does involve matching grants, and it provides it in areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

At this time, though, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to my friend from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1205 today, and I want to thank my good friend from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for his effort in reauthorizing the Coral Reef Restoration Act.

I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Ms. BORDALLO, for her work in helping us facilitate a number of provisions in this bill; Mr. RAHALL, of course, and certainly Mr. YOUNG and Mr. BROWN. This Coral Reef Restoration Act brings a number of different agencies; once again to thank Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA for helping make this happen. The coordination between various Federal agencies in ensuring that the restoration process continues and does so in a very timely fashion is admirable.

For example, ship strikes pose, used to pose somewhat of a danger to coral reefs because of the various levels of bureaucracy. This bill codifies the Coral Reef Task Force, which coordinates those various Federal agencies to more quickly implement policies that can deal with the restoration process.

Mr. Speaker, 20 percent of America's coral reefs are dead. They are destroyed. 50 percent of America's coral reefs are in danger of dying for various, various reasons, and it is so important at this critical time that we understand the nature and the importance, the value to the ecosystem, the value to marine biological communities, and the economic value to all those States and areas that live next to coral reefs and depend upon them for their fisheries, for tourism, for coastal protection and so on.

Coral reefs do protect coastlines, and they're valued for supporting rich biological diversity that is of immense economic value to a number of regions throughout the United States. Half of the federally managed fish species, that equals billions of dollars, spend much of their life cycle in coral reefs.

But coral reefs, as a result of coastal runoff, Overharvesting, and now the effects of climate change, these particular areas of degradation act in a

phenomenally coordinated fashion to degrade our coral reefs. And so this type of legislation can ameliorate the effects of the anthropogenic onslaught to coral reefs; that's the human activity that degrades coral reefs.

Now, this bill, and I'll close with this, affects coral reefs in this manner, because there's multiple effects on coral reefs: Overharvesting, climate change, acidification of the ocean, runoff, pollution in our oceans, debris in our oceans, and a whole range of other things. That means that we have to approach this from a multiple-stressor effect. How do we deal with all these things?

To account for future effects of human activity, including climate change, this bill enables us to manage the coral reefs in something that we will call "ecosystem resilience," the resilience of an ecosystem. If you look at the human body—your lungs, your liver, your kidneys, your bloodstream, your heart—the human body functions in an extraordinary coordinated fashion. It's our own personal ecosystem.

And in the ecosystem abroad, in the Nation's oceans, that ecosystem can function, if it's restored, understanding that concept of an ecosystem, of a metabolism, if you will, to restore it so it is resilient, just like the human body can be restored. But unless you have a process where you're healthy, where you exercise, where you have a good diet, et cetera, et cetera, then you will run through cycles of health and ill health.

The ecosystem of coral reefs will be managed for its resiliency so it can come back after an onslaught of overharvesting; it can come back after an onslaught of pollution; it can resist and be resilient to this unknown factor of climate change.

So for all these reasons, and for all the help we've had from the staff and the Members, I heartily endorse H.R. 1205, and ask the Members to vote in favor of this legislation.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I now recognize my colleague from Florida, the Honorable Mr. KLEIN, for 3 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you, Chairwoman BORDALLO, for yielding me time and Congressman FALEOMAVAEGA for bringing this important legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, coral reefs are among the most diverse, biologically complex, and valuable ecosystems on Earth. In my home State of Florida, we are fortunate to have the third largest barrier reef in the world. Along with their natural beauty, Florida's coral reef systems serve as a critical place for fish habitat and as a potentially lifesaving barrier against hurricanes as well.

But it's only on an everyday level that coral reefs probably have the greatest impact on south Florida, serving as an important source of tourism, jobs and revenue. In Broward County alone, coral reefs contribute over \$2 billion annually to the local economy.

However, coral reefs are in nothing short of a crisis. Because of a variety of threats, scientists estimate that 60 percent of coral reefs may disappear before 2050.

That's why I'm very proud to support all of my colleagues' efforts today to bring this legislation forward. H.R. 1205 will make important changes to the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. One will be able to take advantage of the vast resources and expertise at various coral reef conservation institutions across the country, like the National Coral Reef Institute.

The National Coral Reef Institute will be hosting the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium next year in Florida, which will bring together scientists from throughout the world, over 3,000 of those scientists, to discuss coral reef issues. Harnessing their experience and knowledge and other institutions' will be a vital component of any Federal coral reef conservation plan.

Another important aspect of this legislation we're considering today will be to authorize NOAA to respond to vessel groundings. Since 1994, we've seen 12 large ships run aground on sensitive coral reef areas near Ft. Lauderdale. The last one, occurring almost a year ago, involved a freighter that left a 20-foot swath of destruction along 100 feet of a coral reef. Whatever coral that once lived there is now, unfortunately, gone.

Part of the solution to vessel groundings is adopting better prevention strategies, such as closing anchorage sites in shallow waters that are close to coral reefs. And I'm very proud that the Coast Guard and others have worked to achieve this objective.

But we also need to respond faster when a vessel does run aground, because the sooner coral reefs can be restored, the better chances for their survival. Expanding NOAA's authority to act will allow NOAA to utilize their experience and resources to both assess the damage and restore the reefs.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to adopt this legislation. I thank the sponsors on both sides of the aisle, and recommend that we move forward.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill. It does a good thing and preserves something that is so vital to our Nation as a resource. We do need to be careful about the unintended consequences of the expansion of the term "wildlife" in other statutes just to give the Secretary authority over coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems, even in limited circumstances.

But with that aside, I would encourage support for the bill, and yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to recognize the sponsor of this bill, the Honorable Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA from American Samoa, for 4 minutes.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1205, to reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

First and foremost, I certainly want to commend the chairman of our Natural Resources Committee, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for his support and commitment to this important legislation.

I also would like to acknowledge the leadership and the tremendous support that we have received from my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Alaska, our senior ranking member, Mr. YOUNG, for his spirit of cooperation and certainly for his support of the bill.

Last but not least, I want to recognize especially my good friend, the chairwoman of our Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife, the gentlelady from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

And I want to also commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for his support and management of the bill on the other side of the aisle.

I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman and former chairman of the Fisheries and Wildlife Subcommittee, my good friend from Maryland (Mr. GILCREST). I can't think of a better person that knows more about wildlife than the gentleman from Maryland in the years that I've served with him as a member of the Fisheries Subcommittee.

I also want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN), for his support of this legislation.

I also want to note for my colleagues that the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is also a cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1205, the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2007, is an important piece of legislation because it recognizes that we need to do more now to protect the health of our Nation's coral reefs. We have coral reefs running along the coasts on both sides of the United States, continental United States, especially completely surrounding our U.S. territories.

Coral reefs are critically important, not only here in the United States, but around the world, and we should take the lead in protecting such a vital resource.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1205 has carried over key provisions from legislation that I introduced in the previous Congress which had very strong bipartisan support. This legislation will authorize funding for management assistance grants, enhance research and monitoring, implement local action strategies, and also codify the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which was established by an executive order issued by President Clinton in 1998.

More importantly, we have included recommendations from our experts in the current administration as well as from other Members of Congress, and also certainly to enhance the passage of this legislation. This has been a

work of some 7 months in consultations. Not only did we have hearings in our subcommittee, we had a markup, also a markup in the full committee for which we received unanimous support.

□ 1530

Mr. Speaker, a United Nations report estimates that 60 percent of the world's coral reefs will die off by the year 2030. And with the drastic change to climate as well as the escalation of global warming, our coral reefs are in peril.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1205 affords us an opportunity to take immediate action in conserving and protecting our coral reefs. It is not only critical for our coastal States and territories but, more importantly, for the rest of the world.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. And I would be remiss if I did not recognize the senior staffs of the committee on both sides of the aisle, Ms. Lori Sonken, Mr. Dave Jansen, and my good friend Mr. Dave Whaley for their support and for their work in putting this legislation in such a way that now has the bipartisan support of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Again, this is not a Democratic or Republican bill; it is a bill that will serve the best interests of our Nation.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, as a new chairman of this subcommittee, I want to go on record to thank my colleagues for their input, their expertise on this particular subject. They have all spoken in support of this legislation, and I want to thank them for their bipartisan support.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BORDALLO. I yield to the gentleman from American Samoa.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I just want to note to my colleagues as part of our efforts in preserving the coral reefs is the announcement by President Bush in the last year of the largest marine monument of the world, which is known as the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument, north of the Hawaiian Islands. It is about 140,000 square miles, a little less than the size of Montana, but about the same size as Germany. It also supports some 7,000 species of animal and marine life, which is so important. I think we need to understand that this is also part of what this legislation proposes.

And I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1205, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM AND PATHFINDER MODIFICATION AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1462) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Species in the Central and Lower Platte River Basin and to modify the Pathfinder Dam and Reservoir, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1462

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the “Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and Pathfinder Modification Authorization Act”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Purposes.

TITLE I—PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Definitions.

Sec. 102. Implementation of Program.

Sec. 103. Cost-sharing contributions.

Sec. 104. Authority to modify Program.

Sec. 105. Effect.

Sec. 106. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 107. Termination of authority.

TITLE II—PATHFINDER MODIFICATION PROJECT

Sec. 201. Authorization of project.

Sec. 202. Authorized uses of pathfinder reservoir.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are to authorize—

(1) *the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation and in partnership with the States, other Federal agencies, and other non-Federal entities, to continue the cooperative effort among the Federal and non-Federal entities through the implementation of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program for threatened and endangered species in the Central and Lower Platte River Basin without creating Federal water rights or requiring the grant of water rights to Federal entities; and*

(2) *the modification of the Pathfinder Dam and Reservoir.*

TITLE I—PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) *AGREEMENT.*—The term “Agreement” means the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Cooperative Agreement entered into by the Governors of the States and the Secretary.

(2) *FIRST INCREMENT.*—The term “First Increment” means the first 13 years of the Program.

(3) *GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.*—The term “Governance Committee” means the governance committee established under the Agreement and composed of members from the States, the Federal Government, environmental interests, and water users.

(4) *INTEREST IN LAND OR WATER.*—The term “interest in land or water” includes a fee title,